

The FBI's Counterintelligence Division produces the **FBI Monthly Counterintelligence Bulletin** to keep federal, state, local, and private sector partners informed about counterintelligence threats and issues.

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Former Raytheon Engineer Sentenced for Exporting Sensitive Military-Related Technology to China

Chinese national and naturalized U.S. citizen Wei Sun was sentenced on November 18 in U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona to 38 months in prison for transporting technical information to China without a license, in violation of the Arms Export Control Act and the International Traffic in Arms Regulations. Sun, who worked as an electrical engineer for cleared defense contractor Raytheon Missiles and Defense, admitted in his plea agreement that when traveling to China for personal reasons, he brought with him a Raytheon-issued computer housing sensitive technology, including export-controlled data associated with advanced missile guidance systems. Sun was arrested in January 2019 as he prepared to board a one-way flight to China. [Read about the sentencing.](#)

Former Army Green Beret Pleads Guilty to Russian Espionage Conspiracy

Former Green Beret Peter Rafael Dzibinski Debbins pleaded guilty on November 18 in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia to conspiring to provide Russian intelligence operatives with national defense information. The FBI's investigation revealed Debbins, a Top Secret security clearance holder, disclosed classified information to Russian intelligence agents about his U.S. Army and Special Forces units and activities, as well as information about his team members so they could be evaluated by Russian operatives as potential recruits. In his plea agreement, Debbins admitted he pursued a career in the Special Forces at the encouragement of Russian intelligence officers, traveled to Russia periodically to meet with them, was assigned a code name by Russian agents, and transmitted classified information both during and after his time on active duty. Debbins' sentencing is scheduled for February 2021, and he faces up to life in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000. [Read about the guilty plea.](#)

Researcher Pleads Guilty to Conspiring to Steal Trade Secrets from Children's Hospital to Sell in China

Yu Zhou, a former researcher at Nationwide Children's Hospital, pleaded guilty on December 11 in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio to conspiring to commit wire fraud and conspiring to steal scientific trade secrets concerning the research, identification, and treatment of various pediatric medical conditions. Zhou admitted in his plea agreement he stole confidential and proprietary information from the hospital's Research Institute, where he had worked for a decade, and established a company in China to sell a

product using one of the trade secrets. Zhou's wife, Li Chen, also worked as a researcher at Nationwide Children's Hospital and pleaded guilty in July as his co-conspirator. The details of Zhou's forfeiture will be finalized through the sentencing process, but as part of her plea agreement, Chen agreed to forfeit approximately \$1.4 million, as well as more than 500,000 shares of common stock. [Read about the guilty plea.](#)

Treasury Sanctions Senior Iranian Intelligence Officers Involved in the Abduction and Detention of Former FBI Agent Robert Levinson

The U.S. Department of the Treasury on December 14 sanctioned two senior officials with Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) for their roles in the abduction, detention, and probable death of Robert Levinson, who served for 22 years as an FBI special agent and was abducted in 2007 after traveling to Iran's Kish Island. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control sanctioned the two individuals, Mohammad Baseri and Ahmad Khazai, for directly or indirectly acting on behalf of the MOIS. The designation blocks all of their property and interests subject to U.S. jurisdiction and prohibits Americans and U.S. businesses from engaging in transactions with them. [Read about the sanctions.](#)

Former West Virginia University Professor Sentenced for Wire Fraud and Tax Fraud

Chinese national Qingyun Sun was sentenced on December 6 in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of West Virginia to three years of probation, including four months of home confinement, for filing a false tax return and defrauding West Virginia University (WVU), where he worked as an associate professor and as associate director of the United States–China Energy Center. The FBI's investigation revealed while he was employed by WVU, Sun simultaneously worked for Synfuels Americas Corp., an energy technology company headquartered in Beijing. In his plea agreement, Sun admitted that after traveling to China in 2015, he submitted a request for reimbursement to WVU for a coach flight he had not taken and requested that Synfuels reimburse him for the business-class flight he had taken. Sun also admitted he filed a U.S. income tax return in 2014 that overstated his business-related travel expenses and failed to disclose financial interests in multiple financial accounts in China. As part of his plea agreement, Sun paid restitution to WVU. [Read about the sentencing.](#)

Former Defense Department Employee Arrested on Charges of Taking Cash to Aid Contractor's Request for \$6.4 Million Payment

FBI agents arrested Nizar Farhat, a former civilian construction manager with the U.S. Department of Defense, on December 11 on charges he accepted a gratuity and compensation from a private party for government services—both illegal acts when conducted by public officials. According to a two-count indictment returned in U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, in 2014 and 2015, Farhat oversaw a private company's contract to construct an aircraft hangar and telecommunications facility at a U.S. Navy installation in Djibouti. The FBI's investigation, conducted jointly with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, revealed Farhat allegedly accepted \$34,000 in illegal cash payments in exchange for advising the company, drafting requests on its behalf, and recommending the Navy pay it an additional \$6.43 million. If convicted, Farhat faces up to seven years in prison. [Read about the charges.](#)

The following information has been prepared by outlets outside the U.S. government and has not been corroborated by the FBI or its partners. It is presented here for your situational awareness.

BBC Highlights Dutch Officials' Expulsion of Two Alleged Russian Spies

In a December 11 article, the BBC highlighted the Netherlands' expulsion of two accredited diplomats stationed at the Russian embassy in The Hague who Dutch officials claimed were working for Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service. Citing the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service's statement regarding the diplomats' alleged roles in a "substantial espionage network" focused on the high-tech sector, the BBC detailed their reported targeting of companies in the artificial intelligence, semiconductor, and nanotechnology fields. According to the BBC report, Dutch Interior Minister Karin Ollongren described the alleged spy network as a threat to Dutch economic and national security. [Read the BBC article.](#)

*This Monthly Counterintelligence Bulletin is prepared by the **FBI's Counterintelligence Division**.
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